

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) A method for separation of a fluid comprising surfactants, oil and water, in connection with extraction of such a fluid containing drops of water in oil or oil in water from formations under earth's surface or sea bed, in which the fluid is transported in a supply pipe or transport pipe to a separator, and wherein separated water and oil are passed out of the separator separately via outlet pipes, wherein the fluid, upstream of the separator, is subjected to shear forces so that drops in the fluid are torn up to form new drops that have a diameter that is less than a third of their original diameter and are so small that an interface of the drops generally becomes new and uncontaminated by said surfactants, wherein the shear forces are supplied by a phase inversion stabilizer, and begin a coalescence process that leads to phase inversion, and separated water is recirculated from said separator to said fluid upstream of said phase inversion stabilizer, to lower a water cut in the oil passing out of said separator.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the phase inversion device is in the form of a valve.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein de-emulsifier is added to the fluid before or after the fluid has passed through the phase inversion stabilizer device to prevent the fluid from inverting back to oil-continuous fluid after having passed through the phase ~~immersion device~~ inversion stabilizer.

21. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the separator is in the form of a tubular separator body or a gravitation tank.

22. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the new drops have a diameter that is less than 10% of their original diameter.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the fluid contains drops of oil in water.

25. (Previously Presented) A method for separation of a fluid that comprises surfactants, oil and water, the fluid being extracted from under earth's surface or sea bed, and the fluid containing drops of water in oil or drops of oil in water, said method comprising:

transporting the fluid in a supply pipe or transport pipe to a separator and separating oil of the fluid from water of the fluid in the separator;

passing separated oil and water out of the separator via separate outlet pipes;

subjecting the fluid, upstream of the separator, to shear forces such that the drops of water in oil or the drops of oil in water are torn up to form new drops that have a diameter less than a third of their original diameter and are so small that an interface of the new drops generally becomes new and uncontaminated by said surfactants, wherein the shear forces are supplied by a phase inversion stabilizer, and begin a coalescence process that leads to phase inversion, and separated water is recirculated from said separator to said fluid upstream of said phase inversion stabilizer, to lower a water cut in the oil passing out of said separator.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the phase inversion stabilizer device comprises a valve.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, further comprising adding a demulsifier to the fluid either before or after the fluid has passed through the phase inversion

~~stabilizer device~~ to prevent the fluid from inverting back to an oil-continuous fluid after having passed through the phase inversion ~~device~~ stabilizer.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the separator comprises a tubular separator body or a gravitation tank.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the new drops have a diameter that is less than 10% of their original diameter.

32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the fluid contains drops of oil in water.